

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Wednesday, December 8, 2010, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Cutts at 6:30 p.m.

Members of the Council present were:

Ward II Councilor Keith Raymond
Ward I Councilor Victor Bergeron
Ward III Councilor Nicholas Koloski
Assistant Mayor Andrew Austin
Mayor Deborah Cutts
At-Large Councilor Adam Burke
At-Large Councilor Kyle Messier
At-Large Seat is Vacant

Absent:

At-Large Councilor Christopher Lewis (Excused)

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor

MAYOR'S NOTES

Mayor Cutts talked about the Button Up NH program workshop to be held Wednesday, December 15, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. at Claremont Savings Bank. It is to learn how to reduce home energy costs and is free to attend.

Mayor Cutts said the lights in Broad Street Park look amazing. She thanked the Sole Sisters for doing that.

Mr. Raymond talked about the All Out for Adam in Moody Park (bike race, walk, etc.) and that the support for Adam Maki was phenomenal.

Stevens High School Student Council Update

None

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

A motion was made by Mr. Burke and seconded by Mr. Koloski to accept the minutes of the November 10, 20 and 29, 2010, City Council meetings.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

APPOINTMENT TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Claremont Development Authority

Mr. Koloski nominated Joseph Gorman, Jr. to seat #5.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Bergeron nominated Thomas Rock to seat #6.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Raymond sent thanks to Mr. Gorman who has been on the CDA since 1985.

Tax Increment Finance District Advisory Board – River Road

Mr. Burke nominated Harvey Hill to seat #1.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Transfer Funds Between Departments

None

CITIZEN'S FORUM

Andrew Fennelly, Ward 2 resident and Claremont Housing Authority Executive Director for 8+ years, said the Housing Authority provides 240 assisted units, 140 housing choice vouchers and 96 apartments for elderly and disabled at the Marion Phillips Apartments. They have a \$1.6 million budget and the money comes from the Federal Government. He thanked the City for the services they use. He read a letter of thanks from the tenants at the Marion Philips Apartments for the additional park bench that was placed on Broad Street. Last week they made a \$21,000+ payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) to the City which was \$4,000 more than last year. Mr. Santagate thanked him for doing a great job.

Carolyn Towle, member of the Zoning Board of Administration (ZBA) for 3 years, asked for help filling the vacant seats on the board. She said that she is also a member of the Goodwin Community Center Commission. She would like the Council to send Christmas cards to each of the board members; it would go a long way for morale. Mayor Cutts said the ZBA is one of the most important boards we have. She echoed the plea for applicants.

Mike Hurd, Chair of the ZBA, agreed with Ms. Towle. One case has been continued for four months because they cannot get enough members because some members have conflicts. They are losing one member due to time constraints and another one due to a medical issue. Mr. Hurd has been on the board for 20 years. He said he has received a thank you only two times. Thank yous would reinforce appreciation for people donating their time. Mr. Raymond asked about the meeting times. Mr. Hurd said they meet the first Monday every month. The meetings are usually no longer than 2 hours. The board is considered a judicial board. Mayor Cutts made a strong solicitation to fill the seats. Ms. Messier said training is available to the volunteers. Mr. Koloski said he would like to see the Council engage the public more and to educate the public about which boards are available.

Mr. Santagate said board vacancies are advertised quarterly in the newspaper. Last year the Council started recognizing some of the boards with proclamations and that worked well. Perhaps that can continue. This is a challenging board to serve on, but it is worthwhile.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, said planning and zoning are very important and have to do with the use of land. These are complicated. Training is available, however people are put on those board "cold" and acquire the knowledge as they go. He suggested having an orientation for new members or put something on CCTV (Claremont Community Television).

Ms. Towle clarified that they have many training sessions and they are valuable. The ZBA has come a long way and new members will feel like valuable assets to the City of Claremont.

NEW BUSINESS

Valley Regional Hospital Presentation

Claire Bowen, Valley Regional Hospital (VRH) CEO, said the hospital renovation project came in on time and under budget. It offers patients a warm and comforting environment. They now have one common entrance for everything except the emergency room. Within the main lobby are registration (with 4 private offices), 2 drawing stations for lab services and the Kane Center for oncology services. The new emergency room is 50% larger and can accommodate 12 patients; all rooms are private; it serves 14,000 patients a year; it is close to the lab and radiology; has 2 trauma bays and 8 treatment rooms. All inpatient rooms are private, have family centeredness built within them and all have private bathrooms. The same day surgery center has all private rooms and they have reached 99% in patient satisfaction. She talked about the new Kane Oncology and Cardiology Center. The rehabilitation and therapy center have kitchen, laundry and bathroom facilities to learn in. She talked about the renovated occupational

health area and the new central power plant (\$6 million heating, cooling and ventilation). They relocated the helipad closer to the emergency room.

Mr. Bergeron said he used the emergency room and was well treated. Nice job.

Mr. Santagate asked what the total investment was. Ms. Bowen said \$22.6 million. Mr. Santagate said it is a big improvement over what was there and is an asset to the city. Mayor Cutts echoed that it adds great value to our community.

Shugah Valley Snow Riders Trail Permission

Roger Wright, Shugah Valley Snow Riders Trail Administrator and Ward 3 resident, said that he is an avid snowmobiler. It is a great recreational asset to the community. The city trails are about 60% of the trail network. They connect close to 7,000 miles of trails throughout New Hampshire. He thanked the City for being supportive in the community effort.

Mr. Bergeron asked if they get permission from private property owners. Mr. Wright said yes, they get permission from 85 owners for a total of 115 properties.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to authorize the city manager, or his designees, to take such actions as may be necessary to issue a written Snowmobile Trail Permission, pursuant to RSA 215-A:15 to Shugah Valley Snow Riders, Inc. for a period of one year. This permission is for use of designated City-owned land and class VI highways, which list is to be included with the Use Permission Form and is subject to all City and state rules and regulations pertaining to use of snowmobiles on public property.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

Acceptance of \$2,500 Emergency Lighting and Siren Package from Whelen Engineering

Fire Chief Peter Chase said the emergency lighting and siren package had been installed on a fire department vehicle. Whelen is a Charlestown company. They installed and supplied the lighting at no cost to the City. He gave credit to Golden Cross Ambulance for their help with this.

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Mr. Burke to accept the \$2,500 Emergency Lighting and Siren Package from Whelen Engineering.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Chief Chase talked about the process for replacing a \$400,000 piece of fire apparatus. It involves going out to bid and putting together 90 pages of specifications to build a fire truck. The last three pieces of apparatus were custom ordered; they have better longevity; are easier to

work out of; and there is consistency among the different pieces of apparatus. It is important to buy from a major company or supplier of fire apparatus. Specifications are done electronically. It is a 5-7 month process from signing the agreement to when it is done. He anticipates a good proposal. He will bring back a proposal to the Council in January for a lease/purchase agreement.

Mr. Austin asked what the new truck will be. Chief Chase said it is a pumper that will replace a 1989 pumper with 100,000 miles on it. The old one will be sold.

Mr. Bergeron said he had 40+ years experience in fire service and that it is better to buy quality items and pay the price.

Mr. Burke asked how much money is in the apparatus fund. Chief Chase said \$14,000 and \$55,000 in the operating budget for a lease/purchase. Mr. Burke asked about savings with a down payment. Chief Chase said in 2001 we bought a new ladder truck and paid \$150,000 in interest over a 10-year lease/purchase with no money down. In 2006, they put over \$100,000 down and paid only \$10,000 in interest for a 5-year lease/purchase. Chief Chase said the estimated \$20,000 from the money from the sale of the old pumper will be put back into the escrow account for payment toward a new vehicle.

Chief Chase talked about the airport runway project. In 8 weeks, a \$458,000 project has been 95% completed. It will be finished in the spring. NH DOT (Department of Transportation) has requested one change order and it will be done in the spring. The project was done on time and under budget. St. Pierre Incorporated was the general contractor. This was an airport safety project that will allow airplanes to taxi back to the terminal without being on the active runway.

Mr. Santagate talked about the preliminary proposals that have been received for the North and Main Street project; we see the potential for a phased development along there. We are delighted at the prospect to see an improved route from Vermont into Claremont. Structural Steel has made millions of dollars (both real and personal) of improvements to their building. They continue to do training along with River Valley Community College and we would like to do that with other businesses as well.

Mr. Santagate asked about a meeting date for the special Council meeting for selecting the new Councilor.

Mayor Cutts talked about the process for new Councilor selection. She thanked the applicants for applying. The special meeting will be on Wednesday, January 5, 2011, in Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m. It will be a public meeting. Council will ask a series of questions. The decision will be made that night. Arrangements will be made with the City Clerk to swear in the new Councilor that night. Mayor Cutts will share the standardized questions with the Council. Councilors can make suggestions for changes. Candidates will be given copies of the questions that night. Candidates may make opening and closing statements. Each applicant will receive the same questions. At the end of the questions, nominations will be made (seconds not required) and then votes will be taken to determine the winner. Mr. Raymond read the names of

the applicants: Richard Madigan, Scott Pope, Linda Wooddell, and Thomas Burnham. Mr. Raymond said that he previously had gone through this process and he thought it was fair.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND DIRECTIVES

Mr. Koloski said he would like to see a modern and new approach used to announce board vacancies. He said only a select audience sees the advertisement in the newspaper. We need to tell what boards do and when they meet. Our webpage is daunting.

Mr. Burke serves on the Claremont Planning Board and said they are lucky to have an almost full board. He said that word-of-mouth goes a long way in getting the word out about board vacancies. He enjoys his time on the Planning Board. He encouraged others to get involved.

Mr. Bergeron asked about highlighting one board a week on CCTV (Claremont Community Television) and telling what each board does.

Mayor Cutts asked about putting vacant board information on the scroll on the City's website. She said board members are the greatest cheerleaders and they should speak out in order to find someone to join the board.

Mr. Koloski would like to see the City's website address placed on the City's vehicles.

Resolution 2010-27 Encumbrances – Public Hearing

Mary Walter, Finance Director, said the encumbrances are for projects that could not get done during the year or are to hold money that will be added to next year's budget. Seven departments had asked for \$424,900, however Ms. Walter asked to add \$20,000 to the encumbrances for General Services, 417, because the server has been overheating. The money would be used for an air conditioner to cool the server room.

Mr. Burke asked about cooling the server room now. Ms. Walter said because it is winter, it is not bad. An air conditioning unit was placed in the basement and it should be fine over the winter. In early March or April we will get bids out.

Mr. Koloski asked about the encumbrance for recognition work. Ms. Walter said it will be used to display some of the recognitions we have received for the Mill Project and it could be used for recognition of volunteers as well.

Mr. Burke asked about paving. Public Works Director Bruce Temple said that Thrasher Road is a gravel road. Currently they are logging at the Dole Reservoir and the logging trucks are driving onto Thrasher. They will pave the road next spring.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to adopt Resolution 2010-27 Encumbrances including 417 General Services.

Mr. Raymond read the resolution into the record.

411	Policy	\$700	Replace office chairs
		\$2,000	Update of recognition work
414	Assessing	\$4,500	Expert help with abatements and/or forester services
415	Maintenance	\$140,000	ARRA funding match for City Hall boiler
416	Development	\$5,000	Printing & Advertising for City Center & Zoning Ordinances
		\$2,500	Painting & Railings at Visitors Center
417	General Services	\$20,000	Information Technology Server
441	Highway	\$201,200	Drapers Corner
		\$40,000	Paving
		\$5,000	Add to the 2011 appropriated bridge repair money
471	Cemetery	\$4,000	Match the 2011 appropriation for a mower.
485	Outside Agencies	\$20,000	Social Service Funds
		\$444,900	Total Requested Encumbrance

Mayor Cutts opened the public hearing. No one spoke. She closed it.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

Resolution 2010-28 Appropriation of \$32,000 to Downtown TIFD – Public Hearing

Ms. Walter said when the parking garage, which is inside the Downtown TIFD, was opened last June, there was no money put in the budget for maintenance and repairs. We have lease agreements that allow us to back charge the developers that have leased spaces in the parking garage. She estimated those charges should be about \$32,000. She will then bill out those developer fees at the beginning of the year. This will come from unanticipated revenues with no impact on the tax rate.

A motion was made by Mr. Burke and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to adopt Resolution 2010-28 Appropriation of \$32,000 to Downtown TIFD.

Mr. Burke read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Cutts opened the public hearing. No one spoke. She closed it.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

Resolution 2010-29 Overspend Welfare Budget by up to \$60,000 – Public Hearing

Ms. Walter said Welfare is currently \$23,000 over budget now and bills will continue to come in until January. She is estimating the total will be \$60,000. We are getting a lot of fuel, rent and utility assistance requests. Mr. Santagate said the federal government has cut the fuel oil assistance and so the requests for help will filter down to us. Ms. Walter said the amount for fuel oil assistance has been cut in half. The money will come from the bottom line and will have no impact on the tax rate.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Koloski to adopt Resolution 2010-29 Overspend Welfare Budget by up to \$60,000.

Mr. Raymond read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Cutts opened the public hearing. No one spoke. She closed it.

Mr. Bergeron was concerned about other communities sending people to Claremont and we have to pay for services they receive. He asked about the City being able to back charge the communities that send them here. Ms. Walter said by law, if they are in need and are in this community, they have to be provided emergency services. Mr. Santagate said in general, the City is responsible to pay for it and as the state budget is cut, more people will need help. We can address it with the State Representatives. Mr. Bergeron would like to have this looked into. Ms. Walter said that Claremont has the services and that is why people come here. Mr. Bergeron said it is important to meet with legislators as soon as possible. He's asking for fairness to Claremont.

Mr. Austin asked how much extra money is needed every year. Ms. Walter said she generally asks for \$40,000-\$60,000 each year. A lot of states do not have local welfare, but NH does and those laws were originally written in the 1800s. That number will go up every year.

Mr. Koloski acknowledged that Welfare Director Sue Carr is doing the best that she can.

Mayor Cutts opened the public hearing. No one spoke. She closed it.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Cutts asked Mr. Santagate to advertise the availability of the \$20,000 Social Services money in January with an application deadline of January 21 at 5 p.m. The subcommittee of Messrs. Burke, Koloski and Austin will meet after that and make a recommendation to the Council at the February meeting.

Mr. Koloski asked for a presentation from Planning in reference to marketing the City.

Mr. Bergeron asked about setting up a meeting with the State Representatives and Senator. After discussion about when Councilors would be unavailable, Mayor Cutts said she will extend an invitation to the Representatives and Senator for the week of January 17.

Ms. Messier asked how Council will thank board members. Mayor Cutts is working on that.

Mr. Austin said a light might be out on the outside of the parking garage by the crosswalk. Mr. Santagate will look into it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Master Plan Committee

None

Claremont 250th Anniversary Committee

None

CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

None

Mayor Cutts extended thanks to all of the volunteers in the City of Claremont and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:33 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Messier and seconded by Mr. Raymond to adjourn.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell
Clerk to the Council